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## THE ENGLISH PUPIL'S CREED.

## MY LANGUAGE.

## THE LANGUAGE OF AMERICA.

I HOLD the language of America in reverent regard because it has helped me to understand the greatness of nature, of liberty, of love. Through the words which I have mastered, I have come to appreciate the beauty of the great out-doors; I have learned to cherish the sacred idea of home and family and the government that stimulates my ideals and protects me from all oppression.

In this language I can voice my tenderest love for my parents and express to them my appreciation of the opportunities which their sacrifice has revealed. In the songs that I sing and in the poetry I read, I can find expression for the thoughts and feelings that come to me in the open sunlit fields or in the gloom of thick-set forests, or when I move among the hurrying throngs of those who crowd our city streets.

In the midst of the foolish complaints and murmurings of the unpatriotic, I can lift my voice in earnest protest and proclaim the rare rights and privileges of an American. And I can do this the more effectively because I have learned something of the art of speaking and writing the wonderful language of my country. But this lesson I have only partially mastered. What I have already learned, I shall cherish as a sacred trust—a trust that impels to further study and acquirement. I shall, therefore, wish to keep my language free from the impurities which mar its beauty and to strengthen it with the resources that reveal its power. I shall wish to do this with the faith that it will enable me to become a more patriotic American and a better citizen of the newly-changed world.

## DESULTORY REMARKS ON SOME RECENT BOOKS.

A. B. DE MILLE.

A letter was sent some weeks ago to various publishing houses, asking for books which should be a little outside the routine reading of English teachers. The result is a shelfful of miscellaneous volumes,—war-books, professional treatises, and novels. All, however, are of value to the teacher who reaches out somewhat beyond the day's work; and in the hope that they may prove of interest, a few notes are hereinafter set forth. The only way to deal with so varied an assortment is simply to take them as they come—and talk. All have been read by one whose lot it is to teach English to boys, and many have been read by the boys in question. The net opinion is that they are very much “worth while.”

*How to Read*, by J. B. Kerfoot, forms a good point of departure; if only for the fact that it shows how few have mastered the art. “Reading is a form of living” is the thesis developed in vivid and stimulating manner. The author distinguishes between the two kinds of knowing how to read: “the kind that we are considering in this book, and the kind that the United States census and the dictionary and the primary school have in mind.” The course of his argument is indicated by his chapter-headings, as: Learning to Read; Muckraking the Dictionary; A Sense of Direction; The World Outside Us and the World Within; Intellectual Digestion; How to Read a Novel. No good reader will rest content in being told by another what to seek, but will seek his own, or digest it out of what he finds.

There are two books which should be conscientiously read by English teachers, because of the suggestive methods they employ in handling a well-worn subject. In an age of composition text-books and grammatical treatises they strike an individual note. *The Well of English and the Bucket* is a series of essays by Burges Johnson which will refresh the mind tried by the “meticulous pedantries” of the daily theme-grind. The author holds, frankly, that pure literature has thriven best as an avocation, and that the extended development of writing as a business has somewhat lowered its standards. *Workmanship in Words*, by James R. Kelley, is a protest against

the appalling increase every day in slipshod writing that would not have been tolerated for one moment one hundred years ago.



*Writing Through Reading* (Robert M. Gay) has made its way rapidly hereabouts, and is destined to a wider usefulness. It deals with some old-fashioned methods in a new-fashioned manner that has a very practical appeal. Professor Gay is convinced that the student should not be concerned chiefly with original writing, but that some half of his composition should have emulation for its incentive; that the reproduction of thought from good models affords the most rational method of teaching a pupil to write. Thus baldly stated, the theory lacks the force of the author's explication—which is convincing enough; but that the method is at least worth a careful trial is evident when one realizes the general failure of the "original" system to evolve writers of distinguished English. The book is sound; its aims are not too high; its methods are such as are easy of trial. It would be an illuminating experiment, by the way, if some daring instructor were to throw away all text-books on composition and rhetoric and for one year base his entire teaching upon the four books just discussed.

From the Atlantic Monthly Press have come during the past few years some books of practical helpfulness. Attractively bound, and interesting to the layman because of their well-chosen topics, to us who are in the teaching business they have a special appeal because they present in convenient form much that possesses real literary value. The *Atlantic Classics* comprise two volumes of essays chosen from the *Atlantic Monthly*, "which" says the editor, "seem to deserve a longer life than the paper covers of a magazine permit," and for which there was a demand from the reading public. The *Atlantic Narratives* follow the same general plan and have fulfilled in many schools their purpose of training in the appreciation of the short story. The narratives selected show the "stamp of authenticity" to which the editor refers in a very useful Introduction—that quality which has marked the *Atlantic* stories since, years ago, the magazine was publishing Bret Harte's tales and delighting its readers with a strange new writer called Mark Twain. The Narratives reflect the more recent *Atlantic*; if one wishes to revisit its past and breathe again the airs of Arcady, he will turn to *Atlantic Prose and Poetry*. This collection is intended for school use; but the older reader will be glad to remember and reread past contributors—Mark Twain and Bret Harte.

Thomas Bailey Aldrich, John Kendrick Bangs—a goodly company to be found within the purlieus of a magazine. The editors have mingled old tradition with the newer conceptions of a later day. *Essays and Essay-Writing* is a practical treatise for the student and the general reader. Professor Tanner has done yeoman service in directing the attention of the reader to the modern familiar essay. He divides this literary form into five types and cites example of each; one is intrigued by such titles as “The Daily Theme Eye,” “Asylums for the Hopelessly Sane,” or “Fishes’ Faces.” A sensible introduction guides the reader into the paths of pleasant, if desultory, intellectual enjoyment.

*The Story of Opal* was a “find” for the *Atlantic* people, comparable, perhaps to that other wonderful discovery (in quite another field) when William Dean Howells published Mark Twain’s *Old Times on the Mississippi* in the *Atlantic Monthly* of 1875. The finding of Opal herself is woven into a Preface by the Editor, and her own story is like nothing that has yet appeared in print. The most amazing journal of a child, written down on odd scraps of paper during her life in a Western lumber-camp, in manner no less than matter it is unique. One’s first thought is that no baby of six could have had the imagination to invent, or the patience to set forth, the beautiful fancies that fill its pages. But the appealing quality of the little tale of childish joys and sorrows wakens a responsive note in the hearts of all who love children. The underlying quality is, after all, believable—the “innocence of eye,” the indefinable experiences that move the spirit of a child. *Opal* has been attacked—just as *The Young Visitors* was attacked a year ago, and for much the same reason; but the evidence of authenticity in both cases seems sufficient to the average reader.

The Short story (or “short-story,” as Brander Matthews will have it) has become important in recent teaching of English composition. The whole matter is to be threshed out, *pro* and *con* at our Fall Meeting, and I may suggest here some material (in addition to some already glanced at) which will help to clarify the mind. There are before me several good contributions to the general subject. A rather exhaustive study is to be found in two publications of the Oxford University Press—*Short Stories in the Making*, and *Today’s Short Stories Analyzed*, by R. W. Neal. They are



intended primarily for the writer—"to guide and help persons who wish to write short stories." The former volume especially offers much practical help to those of sufficient maturity. The treatment runs from a careful study of the theory of the short story type through a discussion of plot construction, and covers the various problems that meet the writer. A valuable set of questions and exercises appears at the end of the book. As a companion to this treatise, the author has issued his second volume—*Modern Short Stories Analyzed*. Taken together, the books give a survey of the short story as a literary type, with a mass of illustrative material drawn from the work of the better-known writers of the day. How far these volumes are adapted for use in the average class by the average school-teacher is a point which that individual must decide for himself; but there is no doubt that we should all do well to read them.

Some other groupings of short stories belong in this connection. *Modern Short Stories*, chosen and edited by Frederick H. Law, recognizes the fact that the short story (in the words of the compiler) is just beginning to take its place in the High School course, and that every boy and girl is certain to read short stories rather than novels upon leaving school. The avowed object of this compilation, therefore, is to guide taste and appreciation in short story reading through some really representative material of the past thirty years. We may or may not agree with Professor Law's enthusiasm as to the value of the type as a vital part of the teaching of literature in schools, but we will have an enthusiasm of our own over the merits of his collection. Another good collection, on slightly different lines, is *Prize Stories*, chosen from those selected in competition for the O. Henry Memorial Prize. The winning story—*England to America*—many of us remember reading with keen delight in the *Atlantic Monthly*. More conventional than those just mentioned is the book of *Seven Stories* by Hawthorne, intended to form an introduction to the more extended study of his writings. The stories here brought together emphasize the color and charm which the author found in the New England of the seventeenth century—a time which to most New Englanders seemed barren of romance. A good type of the literary text used in English schools is Hawthorne's *Wonder Book*—a charming little edition which forms one of the "King's

Treasury Series" published by J. M. Dent. This Series should be known to more of us—it is specially adapted to the Junior High School.

Good anthologies of prose are not so many that we can afford to neglect fresh additions to the field. Among such additions, we may commend *A Treasury of English Prose*, which has the unusual merit of being scholarly as well as comprehensive—discriminating no less than catholic. Within 250 pages there are adequate selections from Chaucer to Bernard Shaw; the matter taken from the Elizabethan period includes some citations from *The Book of Common Prayer* of 1552, the noble literary English of which has not before found place in any American anthology. Of this book E. C. Stedman said, in his *Nature of Poetry*: "It is lyrical from first to last with perfect and melodious forms of human speech." In the *Treasury* Emerson and Lincoln both are included, and one is interested to find also the concluding paragraphs of Woodrow Wilson's speech to Congress on the declaration of war with Germany. The book, altogether, tempts the reader to follow out new lines of investigation in English prose. *Modern American Prose Selections* may be taken as a companion volume, though perhaps one that is more directly addressed to the necessities of the teacher. It contains a wisely-chosen group of excerpts from the speeches and writings of men famous in our recent national life, and forms a valuable commentary on several phases of modern American development, written by those who are best fitted to present that commentary.

While we all maintain the value of a sound knowledge of what we pedagogically term "the Classics" as a basis of thorough literary training, we agree also that as teachers we ought to be in a position to recommend to our pupils the best of the recent novels, both in England and America. The subject is one to give us pause: the mere bulk of production is staggering. There are before me now, however, a few novels of late appearance of which it may be well to say a word or two. Some of them we shall recommend to our pupils; some of them we certainly shall not; but taken together they form an exceedingly interesting group of books, with which we should be familiar if we wish to speak with intelligence on the trends of recent fiction.

First, two books for boys: *Jeremy* and *The Mutineers*—



placed thus in juxtaposition, I hasten to add, merely because they happened so to come to hand. *Jeremy*, of course, is one of Hugh Walpole's masterpieces. Can boys read it? Yes: boys have read it, and enjoyed it—boys of nine and boys of fourteen. The story is the tale of a little fellow's life and adventures during his eighth year and the triumph of the author lies herein; trivial happenings, but of such is made up the little world of childhood—a very actual world to "the small, square boy with a pug-nosed face." Can anything be better done—more poignantly tragic, if we look at it aright—than the closing paragraph of the book? *Jeremy* has gone to boarding-school; Hamlet, his dog, is left behind.

Hamlet lay down on the mat just inside the hall door. Someone tried to pull him away. He growled, showing his teeth. His master had gone out. He would wait for his return and no one should move him.

*The Mutineers*, by C. B. Hawes, is a rollicking story of wild adventure on the sea. Attractively got-up, it cannot fail in its frank appeal to every healthy boy. A Salem sailing-ship of 1809 makes a voyage to Canton, half the world away. Things begin to happen right off, and keep on happening after the exhilarating fashion of all good sea-tales. The note of pathos on which the story closes will not make it the less appealing. Read it, and let your pupils go and do likewise.

Of *Nocturne*, by Frank Swinnerton, a sound critic has remarked:

I think *Nocturne* is the most perfect work of imaginative sympathy I have ever read. . . . .

This leaves nothing to be said. Those who know Swinnerton's work will admit the truth of the comment; those who do not should make themselves familiar with one of the few really great novelists of the day. *Invincible Minnie* has some psychological relation to *Nocturne*, but it is set to a harsher key and develops more tragically to a more bitter ending. The heroine is new to American fiction, though not to American life, and her career is traced with an insight that one can only term masterly. It is a "first" novel; the opinions of the critics would seem to indicate that the author has done a noteworthy thing: "An amazing novel," says one. "Vindictively powerful," says another. It is a book for the teacher, not the pupil; a safe prophecy that whether teachers

admire or detest it, they will not ignore it. There is nothing like it in American fiction.

Comes next a group of novels which may well be brought to the notice of young readers. *Miss Lulu Bett* is a middle-Western novel by Zona Gale. Miss Lulu Bett lives in a small town with her married sister, whose husband, Herbert Dwight Deacon, is a lineal descendant of Mr. Pecksniff. Your inference as to the nature of Miss Lulu's life in these circumstances is entirely correct. The patient heroism of her character, however, bears her safely through disappointment that verges on tragedy to happiness at the end of the day. The little tale is told with an intimate charm that makes very real the persons of the drama. *Erskine Dale, Pioneer*, has the advantage of being fathered by a well-known writer—John Fox, Jr. The story is pleasantly reminiscent of Cooper, and deals with frontier life at the close of the Revolutionary Period. It is a boy's book (not that their elders are excluded) and if a shade conventional in treatment, is briskly told and interesting.

The next group of novels takes us far afield—to Switzerland, to the Eastern Mediterranean, to New Zealand, and to the Canadian Northwest. First is *In the Mountains*, a whimsical and alluring book the authorship of which is not revealed. It is delightfully written—there is no other expression. The scene is laid in a little Swiss chalet; the characters are the writer, her servants, and two tourist ladies—for one of whom a kindly fate appoints the coming of the Dean. Nor must one forget Mou-Mou, kindest-hearted and most grim-visaged of watch-dogs. The book has depths under its sparkling surface wrought of laughter and Alpine flowers and snow; behind the sunshine lurks something dark; something pathetically indicated, but not to be revealed. . . . "Today is my birthday. . . . It is the first birthday I've ever been alone, with nobody to say Bless you." . . . Wrought from very different materials, *Captain Macedoine's Daughter* is spiritually related to its author's earlier books *Casuals* and *Aliens of the Sea*. Mr. McFee has perhaps done for the Grecian Archipelago what Conrad has done for the Malayan Islands and the effect is produced in much the same way—even to the technique. As in *Lord Jim*, the story is told by a single narrator to a more or less interested and somewhat sophisticated group of listeners. Mr. Spenlove,



of *Captain Macedoine's Daughter*, is the Marlowe of *Lord Jim* and other Conrad tales. The method is good; one becomes of the hearers, and as the story unfolds itself to the music of the moonlit waves and the ship noises all about—"the bell struck in the night"—its magic and mystery fashion themselves into a spell that he is loath to break. It is a story of fascinating people—powerfully cumulative, it grows rather grimly to a tragic conclusion. One would say that the author, like Conrad, is obsessed by the scenes which he depicts. Equally vivid, though vividness is attained through different methods, is *The Story of a New Zealand River*, by Jane Mander. If this novel is typical of the literary production of that far-set island, we should know more about it. Not so much in originality of plot does the strength of the book lie, as in the reflected environment of a life that is new and rough and widely removed from the conventionalities of older lands. It is a wise thing to step out of our own place and know something of our own kind in other places, the problems that they meet and the sorrows they endure. David Bruce and Alice, Tom Roland and his strong, animal life with its heroic ending; the cloudy rain-washed land, the River, the saw-mill screaming among the giant trees, the lonely unlovely settlement—acquaintance with these enlarges our vista of life. Last in the group under discussion is *The Luck of the Mounted*, a story of the Canadian North West Mounted Police by Sergt. Ralph S. Kendall; an epic of a fine body of men who for years have done their work and kept their mouths shut, asking, literally, nothing of the world but the chance to do their duty.

For the teacher who is concerned primarily with the deeper side of literature nothing better could be found than Professor Bliss Perry's *A Study of Poetry*, the work of a man who joins scholarship with charm of style and who has produced a book that is useful both in the class-room and the library. Touching lightly on the Epic and the Drama, the author devotes special attention to the Lyric—a form to which, he says, our own generation is peculiarly attracted. In this general connection should be mentioned the beautiful library edition of Joyce Kilmer's works, which forms a fitting memorial to a gallant figure in American life and letters. He is perhaps best remembered as a poet, but the essays and the familiar correspondence comprised in the volumes show admirably the brave, humorous, wise personality of the man.

The need for a palatable history of literature is well satisfied in *English Literature*, by Edwin L. Miller. The writer terms it "an introduction and guide to the best English books" and "a handbook for schools and readers"—which expresses accurately the aims and limitations of the volume. Written in familiar style, with plenty of interesting pictures, it is the sort of literary history that boys and girls will read. For the teacher there is a wealth of material; the whole range of English Literature being covered fully down to Chesterton, Shaw, and Rupert Brooke, with an appreciative chapter on Kipling. The general method is to emphasize the man rather than the period: hence, all the great writers receive more thorough treatment than is possible in most text-books. A useful companion to the larger volume is *The Facts and Backgrounds of Literature*, a compilation adapted as well as anything yet issued to the rapid reviews that must be carried out under the imminence of College Entrance Examinations at the end of the year.

For the student of the Drama, *Modern American Plays* will afford valuable material. The editor, Professor George P. Baker, has probably contributed more than anyone else to the advance of the American stage and it is natural that this volume should offer to the reader more than mere summary and illustration. The technical student, if not the general reader, will find materials for his work in *Masterpieces of the English Drama*, an edition of unusual excellence in form and content. It is difficult to see how anyone can teach Shakespeare intelligently without some idea (at least) of his fellow dramatists. The *Masterpiece* Series offers just what is needed. Each volume is edited by a competent critic (*Ben Jonson* by Ernest Rhys, *Marlowe* by W. L. Phelps, and so forth) who gives, through introduction, notes and glossary, the right kind of information.

To us in America the Great War seems as a dream that is past; but to Englishmen and Frenchmen its dire results are still about their paths. It is not well that we should so forget, and there are three books that may serve to orientate our point of view. *A Short History of the Great War*, by A. F. Pollard, is the work of a keen student of history who, like most English scholars, has a masterly command of the language. The book is unquestionably the best thing of its size that has appeared. Other histories may be more volu-



minous; none sets forth the matter so clearly and vividly and with such judicial accuracy. A number of excellent maps add to the value of the work. It would be an enlightening experience for our boys and girls to read this brief and reliable account of the vast struggle which has so profoundly modified the international conditions of the world. *The Victory at Sea*, by Admiral Sims, may be considered the official history of the United States Navy in the War. Here, again, we should not forget, nor allow our pupils to forget; and this book is well-fitted to school use. *A Merchant Fleet at War*, by A. Hurd is a sumptuous book, illustrated in color and from photographs taken on active service, and containing an account of some of the war work carried on by merchant seamen. The colored illustrations are beautifully executed and serve to bring home to us the cruel dangers faced by those who went down to the sea in ships during the War. The compiler tells of the difficulty of gathering the stories of "these men who dislike publicity and whose modesty disarms the inquisitor." But the work has been done, and well done; and the result lies in a volume artistic in bookmaking and typography, as well as a tribute to gallant sailor-men.

A miscellaneous half-dozen of unrelated books will serve to complete these rambling remarks on modern reading. *The Oxford Stamp*, a collection of essays by Professor Aydelotte, is a contribution to the study of English and of general education. The progressive teacher of "Americanization" cannot do better than to add to his mental equipment by reading three recent contributions to the subject: *Americans by Adoption*, *Americans All*, and *The Upward Path*. Last of our long list is a cheerful book of the open air—*Everyday Adventures*, by S. Scoville. "For the sick and the sorry and the weary at heart," says the naturalist-author, "stands a refuge at their very doors. There needs but sight to the unseeing eyes and the unstopping of deafened ears, and the way to the World where the sweet Wood-Folk dwell lies open."

It is time our tedious song should now have ending, but what has been said will perhaps serve to indicate to teachers of English some works of merit which may not have been called to their attention. Our thanks are due to the firms mentioned below for their courteous cooperation.

*The Atlantic Monthly Press, Boston.*

The Story of Opal, Opal Whiteley: \$2.00. Atlantic Prose and Poetry: \$1.00. Atlantic Classics: \$1.25. Atlantic Narratives: \$1.00. Writing through Reading, Robert M. Gay: \$1.00. Americans by Adoption, Joseph Husband: \$1.00. The Mutineers, C. B. Hawes: \$1.50. Everyday Adventures, Samuel Scoville, Jr.: \$3.00. Atlantic Readings: 15 cents each.

*George H. Doran Company, New York:*

Joyce Kilmer, 2 Vols.: \$5.00. Jeremy, Hugh Walpole: \$1.90. Nocturne, Frank Swinnerton: \$1.75. Invincible Minnie, Mrs. Holding: \$1.75.

*Harcourt, Brace and Howe, New York.*

Modern American Plays, George P. Baker: \$2.25. Modern American Prose Selections: \$1.00. A Short History of the Great War, A. F. Pollard: \$3.25. Americans All, B. A. Heydrick: \$1.20. The Upward Path: 92 cents. Seven Stories by Hawthorne: 80 cents.

*The Oxford University Press, New York.*

The Oxford Stamp, F. Aydelotte: \$1.50. Today's Short Stories Analyzed, R. W. Neal: \$2.50. Short Stories in the Making, R. W. Neal: \$1.00.

*Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston.*

How to Read, J. B. Kerfoot: \$1.75. A Study of English Poetry, Bliss Perry: \$3.25. A Treasury of English Prose, L. P. Smith: \$1.75.

*Doubleday, Page and Company, Garden City, New York.*

In the Mountains: \$1.90. Captain Macedoine's Daughter, W. McFee: \$1.90. Prize Stories: \$1.90. The Victory at Sea, Admiral Sims: \$3.00.

*Little, Brown and Company, Boston.*

The Well of English and the Bucket, Burges Johnson: \$1.50. Workmanship in Words, J. P. Kelley: \$1.10.

*The Century Company, New York.*

Modern Short Stories, F. W. Law: \$1.25. Facts and Backgrounds of Literature: \$1.45.

*John Lane Company, New York.*

The Story of a New Zealand River, Jane Manders: \$2.00. The Luck of the Mounted, Sergt. R. S. Kendall: \$2.00.

*The Cunard Steamship Company (Distributors), New York.*

A Merchant Fleet at War, A. Hurd: \$3.00.



Messrs. Scribners' Sons, New York.

Ersine Dale, Pioneer, John Fox, Jr.: \$2.00.

D. Appleton and Company, New York.

Miss Lulu Bett, Zona Gale: \$1.75.

J. B. Lippincott Company, Philadelphia.

English Literature, E. L. Miller: \$2.00.

E. P. Dutton and Company, New York.

Hawthorne's Wonder Book: 70 cents.

American Book Company, New York.

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### NOTE.

Our Twentieth Fall Meeting will be held on Saturday, December 11 in Huntington Hall, Boylston St., Boston, beginning at 9.45 A. M. The general subject is: "The Place of the Short Story in English Teaching." Our President has organized an interesting program, a copy of which goes with this *Leaflet*. Come prepared to join in the Discussion.

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This list is constantly increasing. Further information furnished upon request.

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